



The New England Center  
for Children®  
*Autism Education and Research*

## **THE NEW ENGLAND CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER BRINGS VOCATIONAL TRAINING TO STUDENTS WITH AUTISM**

*Helping Students Succeed: NECC Prepares Young Men and Women for the  
Workforce with Career Education, Training, and Job Outreach*

**Southborough, Mass. – April. 5, 2017** – For students like Chris who have autism, transitioning from school to the workforce can be a daunting task. Young men and women with autism often face challenges with social and vocational skills that can prohibit them from entering the workplace.

The New England Center for Children® (NECC®), a global leader in education and research for children with autism, helps prepare their students for the workplace with a comprehensive Vocational Training program.

Vocational skill development begins at age 14, in accordance with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and state labor laws, and includes up to 4 hours per week of vocational exploration within the school, often starting within NECC's on-site Career Development Center (CDC).

“The CDC is a first step for students to learn about various jobs, discover preferences for work, practice skills, and gain confidence,” said Julie Weiss, Director of Vocational Services.

As students age, the amount of time spent on vocational training increases, as does paid and volunteer work. The goal is to both advance their skill set and develop work endurance. Students may work in the community or within the school including serving in the cafeteria, working at the staff copy center, delivering mail, staffing the student store, and re-shelving books in the library.

Around age 18, when the transition to adulthood is not far off at age 22, the Vocational Training program focuses on developing adult career goals and securing long-term paid employment.

Chris, a student at NECC, has always loved cars. When Chris began vocational training, his attention to detail was clearly a strength. He enjoyed doing a job where he could see the result of his hard work.

Today he works at J. White Automotive in Framingham, a busy auto service and restoration shop. During his shift, Chris washes the automobiles and learns additional job-related skills. He has been employed by J. White's Automotive for almost a year.

"Chris loves cars and is a dedicated, conscientious worker. He always has a smile and lights up a room. He is learning to detail automobiles, a useful vocational skill that will help Chris secure future work," said Shirley Warren, co-owner of J. White's Automotive. "We are big supporters of The New England Center for Children and believe that kids with autism should be given opportunities to train and work."

What types of paid jobs do students train for and work at? Quite a variety. Jennifer was a café attendant at Starbucks and loves her coffee. Honghui was a grocery assistant at Whole Foods and Jamal, a clothes folder at TJ Maxx.

### **Recognizing the Value of Employees with Autism**

Many progressive employers in Massachusetts are working with NECC to provide training and job opportunities for young men and women with autism. These include:

- Walgreens
- TJ Maxx
- Whole Foods
- Sun Life Financial
- Starbucks
- Encompass Fitness
- J. White Automotive
- Framingham Public Library
- Worcester County Food Bank
- Community Harvest Project
- Beaumont Nursing Centers
- Milford Senior Center
- Buddy Dog Humane Society
- Kitty City of Pet World
- MetroWest Humane Society
- St. Anne's Food Pantry/Thrift Shop
- Northborough Free Public Library
- MetroWest Home Care and Hospice
- Ashland Thrift Store

### **Disseminating Their Knowledge**

In addition to supporting student development at NECC, the organization is steadfast in sharing their knowledge of best-in-practice autism education programs. In May, Julie Weiss and Julie LeBlanc, Vocational Specialist, will present a workshop titled "From the classroom to the workforce: Teaching vocational skills to individuals with an autism spectrum disorder" at ABAI's 43rd Annual Convention in Denver.

### **Seeking Employers Dedicated to Diversity**

NECC has 140 students over the age of 14 who are ready to begin planning for their career and developing skills related to employment. NECC invites employers in Massachusetts to participate in NECC's **Vocational Services program**. Please contact Julie Weiss, Director of Vocational Services, (508) 481-1015 x3193, [jweiss@necc.org](mailto:jweiss@necc.org).

## **About The New England Center for Children**

The New England Center for Children® (NECC®) is a world leader in education, research, and technology for children with autism. For more than 40 years, our community of teachers, researchers and clinicians have been transforming lives and offering hope to children with autism and their families. NECC's award-winning services include home-based, day, and residential programs; public school partnerships and consulting; the John and Diane Kim Autism Institute; and the ACE® ABA Software System used by more than 4,620 students in 24 states and nine countries. NECC received the 2017 Award for International Dissemination of Behavior Analysis from the Society for the Advancement of Behavior Analysis (SABA). A 501c3 non-profit, The New England Center for Children is based in Southborough, MA, and also operates a center in Abu Dhabi, UAE. More information is available at [www.necc.org](http://www.necc.org).

###

Due to confidentiality laws, real student names are not used.

Contact:

Michele Hart  
The New England Center for Children  
(508) 481-1015 x4049  
[media@necc.org](mailto:media@necc.org)